

MEETING NOTES | October 10, 2013

Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel

MEETING IN BRIEF

Comments due November 14 on Revised Draft Sections 1-5

- Members have through November 14 to submit comments to Tim Parker and Marcus Trotta on revised draft Sections 1-5 of the plan.
- Comments submitted sooner – by Monday morning, Oct. 21, 9:30am –will be discussed at the October TAC meeting.

The State Water Board has released Draft Groundwater Work Plan Concept Paper.

<http://www.scwa.gov/srgroundwater/>

The State Board is currently accepting public comment on it. It includes and describes five elements the State Water Board believes are needed for effective groundwater management: thresholds, monitoring and assessment, governance, funding and enforcement. Panel members are encouraged to review it, and may wish to discuss it at a future Panel meeting.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has released the first portion of its Public Review Draft of California Water Plan Update 2013 for review and comment

<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/cwpu2013/prd/index.cfm>

DWR plans to release the update section by section, as they become available. Related reports from California's ten hydrological regions will start to be released October 23, beginning with the North Coast Region. This spring, DWR plans to release a groundwater-specific document, containing newly-available information related to wells, changes in storage, and hydrographs. Panel members may wish to listen on-line to a groundwater-specific discussion of a DWR public advisory committee on October 29 from 1:50-3:50.

<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/materials/index.cfm?subject=oct2913>

Audio-Taping. In the interest of encouraging free exchange of ideas at Panel meetings, the facilitation team continues to recommend that attendees not audio-tape meetings since it makes some members uncomfortable. If any attendee chooses to audio-tape anyway, we ask that you announce your intentions to the group for transparency. In this case, the Water Agency will audio-tape as well, and make the tape available via the project website so all have access to the same information. At this meeting, an attendee did announce the intention to audio-tape, and consequently, the Water Agency audio-taped the meeting as well. The recording has been posted on Dropbox and can be accessed at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/l9u9iimrzt7bpfd/FazGtUB--q>

Next Panel Meeting: November 14, 9:00-12:00, at 35 Stony Point Rd.

Topics: Additional comments on revised draft Sections 1-5, including feedback from constituent briefings; update on TAC progress for preliminary prioritization of recommended management actions for draft Section 6; initial strategy for funding plan implementation; update on status of USGS Study Part II; and planning community forums for early 2014.

MEETING SUMMARY

Orientation to Revised Draft Sections 1-5

Facilitator Marci DuPraw noted that this is the first of several opportunities to provide feedback on the revised draft GMP Sections 1-5, which have been revised according to the guidance of the TAC. Consultant Tim Parker and SCWA Project Manager Marcus Trotta acknowledged and thanked the TAC for its dedication and excellent work in development of the draft GMP text. Noting that the figures in the current text are preliminary (pending receipt of originals from USGS), they gave Panel members a brief orientation to the nature of the latest revisions, as follows:

- Section 1 (introduction) – no changes
- Section 2 (water resources) – has been edited down a lot, particularly the section containing background information on various kinds of water resources (i.e., groundwater, surface water, recycled water), and information on water quality. This section will undergo additional changes to incorporate text related to Part II of the USGS Study, once that becomes available (groundwater modeling approach and results, including climate change scenarios and water budget); thus, Panel members can expect to comment on another revision of this section in early 2014.
- Section 3 (summary of current management and planning efforts) – not much change; let Tim and Marcus know if anything is missing, or described inaccurately.
- Section 4 (goals and objectives) – content has remained essentially the same, but verbiage has been significantly streamlined, based on Panel feedback. Effort was made to ensure that each entry was truly a “goal” or “objective.”
- Section 5 (management components) – has undergone significant revision; please give it a close read. Tim encouraged Panel members to suggest any additional water agency / water supplier projects or plans that the Panel should consider for inclusion as recommended actions in this section.

Feedback on Revised Draft GMP

[Sections 1.0-5.0, dated 2013_09-30]

Panel members offered the following feedback on revised draft Sections 1-5:

- Overall:
 - One Panel member mentioned concerns about the extent to which the Plan should address: (a) Connection or barrier to the adjacent Russian River watershed; and (b) land subsidence. Other TAC members and consultant Tim Parker pointed out places where each are addressed in the current text. Facilitator Marci DuPraw encouraged the Panel member to make specific suggestions about where each could be addressed further, if desired, as we work through the relevant sections.
- Section 1 – None

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- Sections 2 and 3
 - Clarify the overall trends of groundwater use -- what do we expect to happen in the future?
 - The numbers show such a big range ... does the “average” actually mean anything?
 - Give more context with respect to water use by various agencies and by other users
 - Include a graph to help show trend
 - Include text that “anticipates” water model (what we think it will say)
 - Section 2.4.7 & Figure 2-18 (land subsidence)
 - This section seems to be thorough
 - Seems to include a complete statement of the situation
 - Section 2-21 (groundwater/surface water recharge)
 - Add a graphic showing groundwater/surface water interaction – i.e., the concept of an “account” (the “sustainability equation”) to help readers understand consequences of drought
 - Include a chart – i.e., the water cycle.
 - Don’t assume the new groundwater budget section (anticipated after release of USGS Study Part 2) will cover this, since that section will just focus on groundwater, and this request is about groundwater / surface water interactions.
 - A recharge / discharge diagram might be helpful.
 - Show residents consequence of use. (This is especially key, since this plan is voluntary.) In addition, get this across in a 1-pager for the public on the elements of the plan.
 - Section 3.41 – Add an entry discussing the fact that small MS4s are joining the Phase 1 Stormwater Permit.
- Section 4 – nice job
- Section 5 – None (yet). Panel members are still reading and absorbing.

Members have through November 14 to submit comments to Tim Parker and Marcus Trotta on revised draft Sections 1-5 of the plan. However, comments received by 9:30am Monday morning, Oct. 21, will be discussed at the October 23 TAC meeting. Panel members can expect additional revision of this text in early 2014 to incorporate USGS Study Part II and feedback from constituent briefings and community forums.

Initial Discussion of Section 6 (Implementation)

Consultant Tim Parker noted that the preliminary text for this section (Structure, Governance, and Roles) has not changed since last distributed, but that it is time to begin to flesh it out. Today, he sought input on criteria to use in prioritizing implementation activities. Tim provided half a dozen straw examples of prioritization criteria to stimulate discussion. Panel members affirmed those criteria that Tim mentioned, suggested a few more criteria, offered suggestions about how to approach the prioritization task, and explored action items to begin to line up implementation funding, as follows:

- Approach to prioritization:
 - Prepare for prioritizing by mapping critical path and sequencing.
 - Despite the results of our prioritization efforts, we should have a guiding principle that we can implement actions out of the “prioritized sequence” if funding availability present an unexpected window of opportunity.
 - We need to think through the level at which we want to prioritize (e.g., specific recommended actions vs. management component vs. something else).
 - Some recommended actions are required; these may be numerous enough to fill up the 1st-year action plan. Maybe we should just prioritize things that would be initiated after that (e.g., between Years 2 and 5, or some other explicitly chosen timeframe).
 - The TAC will take the first cut at prioritization, and bring that forward as a recommendation for the Panel’s consideration.

- Suggested prioritization criteria:
 - Feasibility (Panel’s input on this will be key) – includes primarily technical and political implementability, cost, regulatory impacts, and community support or opposition; to help Panel consider this criteria, we also need to clearly define any impact each recommended action will have on water rights (if any), with hope to avoid impact.
 - Critical path / sequence
 - Potential regulatory impacts (e.g., whether regulations or permits would be needed to implement the recommended action; whether it would have environmental impacts that would trigger CEQA requirements; whether it relies on experimental technology, etc.)
 - Cost
 - Benefit (meant in a broad, qualitative sense – i.e., extent to which recommended action advances one or more GMP goals; number of goals and objectives the recommended action supports)
 - Readiness
 - Community and political support
 - Similar local efforts
 - Opportunity to leverage low hanging fruit (existing circumstances, existing projects, funds, partnerships)

Action items to begin to line up implementation funding:

- The need to begin working with potential funders to ensure funding for Plan implementation gets into local agency budgets (which are firmed up by January/February and formally approved in July).
- Marcus will contact potential co-funders to arrange to meet with them and discuss initial thinking on budget requests. He will update the Panel at its November meeting, at which point the Panel will consider next steps (including the possibility of forming a funding working group).

Outreach Coordination

Panel members discussed two types of outreach that are needed in coming months. These include constituent briefings between now and December, as well as community forums anticipated for early 2014. Highlights of the discussion follow.

Fall 2013 Constituent Briefings.

Project staff strongly encouraged Panel members to brief their constituency groups between now and December on the Panel's progress in developing the Plan (particularly, on Sections 4 and 5 -- the draft goals, objectives, management components and recommended actions). Staff made the point that it is critical to keep constituents in the loop all along, so that constituent input can be incorporated as we go along, rather than receiving requests for major revisions at the end of the process. Staff also encouraged Panel members to brief other community groups by getting on the agenda for existing community group meetings. They oriented Panel members to briefing materials available on the project website for their use in briefing their constituents, including talking points, a flier, and a PowerPoint presentation.

Staff circulated: (a) a sign-up sheet, which included space to request staff assistance with briefings; and (b) forms for Panel members to use in reporting back to the Panel on the input their constituents provide. The completed sign-up sheet is attached to this summary, for Panel members' convenience.

Panel members suggested that:

- Staff develop a 3, 5, and 15 minute version of the PowerPoint presentation; and
- Panel members focus their briefings around one consistent message.

Rocky Vogler mentioned that he has recently done a briefing on the USGS study (Part 1) for his City Council. They were quite interested, and he received very insightful comments.

Community Forums (early 2014).

Panel member Jane Nielson updated attendees on her proposal that the Water Agency and the Panel hold several community forums in early 2014 to update the community-at-large on the emerging draft Plan and invite feedback for incorporation into the final Plan. She suggests:

- Holding one forum in the Sebastopol area and one in the Cotati area.
- Arranging for co-sponsorship of each, with a local member of the Panel and another community group.
- Organizing a subset of the Panel to make a presentation at each forum (similar to how a steering committee did this when the Panel was getting off the ground).
- For the Sebastopol area forum, Jane has reached out to fellow Panel member Sue Kelley as a local co-sponsor from the Panel (who is receptive to the idea) and has in mind the Laguna Foundation as the second co-sponsor.
- For the Cotati area forum, Jane has reached out to fellow Panel member Damien O'Bid as a local co-sponsor from the Panel (who is receptive to the idea) and has in mind Jenny Blaker of the Cotati Creek Critters as the second co-sponsor.

The Panel welcomed the proposal to hold a round of community forums, noting that they are an excellent way to raise the community's level of comfort with the emerging Plan and to get community input on it. They liked the idea of co-sponsorship, seeing it as a way to increase attendance.

The bulk of Panel discussion on this proposal focused on the timing of these forums. Ideally, the Panel would like to hold these forums after integrating the results of the USGS Study, Part 2; however, there is significant uncertainty about the timeframe in which those results will be available, particularly in light of the current federal government shut-down. The Panel sees benefit in holding these forums during the period in which potential Implementing Entities are developing their budget requests (between now and February). The possibility of doing two rounds of forums was mentioned, but the Panel observed that the community probably has sufficient interest for one round, but not two. Consequently, the Panel plans to do the community forums after integrating the USGS study results, and in the meantime, work with staff of Implementing Agencies through briefings to update them on progress and develop appropriate budget requests. This timing will be revisited at the November Panel meeting, in light of an update on the timing for the release of the USGS study. We may want to develop a back-up plan that gives us a way to adapt to the uncertainty associated with the timing of the USGS study.

Other highlights of the discussion included:

- We will want to prepare briefing materials that are meaningful and reflect a future focus.
- We will want to reach out to the media to help get the word out about the community forums (e.g., Press Democrat, etc.).
- In planning each forum, we should think about the area and water resources they rely on, and ensure we invite the participation of a wide range of interested parties (e.g., communities on wells; city leaders, etc.).

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members

Keith Abeles
Michael Burns
Rue Furch
Kara Heckert
Len Holt
Lloyd Iversen
Sue Kelly
Gary Mikkelson
Jane Nielson
Damien O'Bid
Pete Parkinson
Walt Ryan
Tito Sasaki
Rocky Vogler
Dave Vossler (for Elizabeth Cargay)
Glen Wright (for Jennifer Burke)

Other Participants

Karl Adelman
Beth Lamb
Jeremiah Puget

Staff

Tim Parker, Technical Consultant
Marcus Trotta, Project Manager
Jennifer Laroque, SCWA Public Affairs
Marci DuPraw, Facilitator